

KING OF PRUSSIA, PA — Congressman Joe Sestak visited the offices of Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RBD) in King of Prussia on Monday, February 23, 2009, to meet with members of the staff as well as representatives of the Philadelphia Veterans Administration Medical Center who rely on RBD to help visually impaired veterans.

“As a legislator, I have done everything in my power to aid the visually impaired,” said Congressman Sestak. “In 2007, I voted in favor of the ‘Heroes Earning Assistance and Relief Tax Act,’ which included tax provisions intended to assist blind veterans and their families by changing eligibility rules for the Supplemental Security Income program. I also proudly support a bill to authorize the placement in Arlington National Cemetery of an American Braille tactile flag honoring blind members of the Armed Forces, Veterans, and other Americans.”

“My staff and I have recently met with the National Braille Press on several occasions,” the Congressman continued. “They are developing an advanced, affordable Braille computer – potentially available for one-tenth the cost of current technology – using organic film. Rather than only allowing single lines of text, the device could display multiple lines and even images.” The Congressman continues to support the efforts of the National Braille Press in the “Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act,” which would help fund this program. In a sign of his support and recognition of the visually impaired community, Congressman Sestak carries business cards that contain his information printed in Braille.

The Congressman also discussed provisions of the recently passed Economic Stimulus Bill that benefit special education and those with special needs. The bill includes \$12.2 billion for Special Education/IDEA to improve educational outcomes for disabled children. This level of funding will increase the Federal share of special education services to its highest level ever. Benefits for Pennsylvania include \$426.6 million for Special Education Part B State Grants to help improve educational outcomes for individuals with disabilities, raising the federal contribution to nearly 40 percent, the level established when the law was authorized more than 30 years ago.

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic was born out of an effort by the New York Public Library's Women's Auxiliary to provide support for servicemen who lost their sight in World War II. The organization now has a volunteer force of more than 7,100 who added 6,189 titles to their library in 2007 alone.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.*

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